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PARSHA INSIGHT

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

I Know It's Only Rock 'n' Roll

“When you go out to war against your enemies...and you will capture its captivity.” (21:10)

Educational psychologists recognize the wisdom of our Sages in Pirkei Avot: *Elisha ben Avuya says, “One who learns as a child is like ink on new paper, and one who learns when he is old is like ink written on paper which has been erased.”*

However hard one tries to erase the writing of one's youth, there will always be a residual grayness on the paper of the mind.

How I wish my *bekiut* (breadth of knowledge) in Torah was as clear as my recall of the lyrics of “Bridge Over Troubled Water”!

A young fellow had started learning at a *ba'al teshuva* Yeshiva and came to Rav Shlomo Wolbe zt”l with a question: “Rebbe, I was once a national violin virtuoso. Is it permissible for me to continue playing?”

“No”, said Rav Wolbe. “It is not permissible. It's *obligatory*. I give you a *beracha* (blessing) that one day, playing the violin will no longer fulfill your highest spiritual aspirations. Only Tosefot will be able to do that. Until that moment you are obliged to continue playing the violin.”

The *yetzer hara* (negative inclination) is a spring — if we bear down on it too hard we will find it springs back at us with twice the force.

All spiritual growth is incremental. “Grasping at Angels” leads to a peremptory and painful fall.

“When you go out to war against your enemies...and you will capture its captivity.”

Rashi says: *The Torah is speaking here only in response to the yetzer hara.*”

The *yetzer hara* is a person's greatest enemy. The only way to ‘capture’ its ‘captivity’ — to re-‘capture’ for our-

selves our independence from its domination — is with stealth and patience, as Rashi goes on to describe.

Similarly, it says in last week's Torah portion: *“When you go out to the battle against your enemy, and you see horse and chariot, a people more numerous than you, you shall not fear them, for the L-rd your G-d is with you...” (13:7)*

Seven verses after this exhortation the Torah says: *“Who is the man who is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, and let him not melt the heart of his fellows, like his heart.”*

Didn't the Torah just tell him not to fear because G-d is with him? Where is his faith? Where is his *bitachon*? Where is his stiff upper lip?

The Torah mandates the ideal, but it also understands human nature.

Although as a younger person I had a successful career in the music business, I never played in a band. And so it was that I put up signs around Ohr Somayach for “*The Ohrchestra* – Ohr Somayach's own electric band.” The *lishma* (altruistic) side of the band was to give those students who needed an outlet for their musical talents a forum. The flip side was that I wanted to pick up an *axe* (guitar) and bang out some old chords that were banging around in the brain.

I seriously doubt that the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Nota Schiller, will be booking Carnegie Hall in the near future for “*The Ohrchestra*,” but it certainly allows some young (and not-so-young) aspiring *talmidei chachamim* to let down more than their *peyot*.

Menachot 2 - 8

A Time for a Beautiful Offering

Rabbi Shimon says: It would be logical to think that a mincha (flour) sacrifice of a “sinner” should require the same oil and frankincense that are part of regular mincha offerings, so that the sinner should not be rewarded (by not needing to offer these components). And why doesn’t the mincha sacrifice of a sinner actually require these elements? They are lacking so that his sacrifice not be seen as beautiful. And it also would be logical, continues Rabbi Shimon, that the chatat (sin-offering) for eating chelev (forbidden fats, but Rashi explains that the same is true for any chatat) should be accompanied by oil libations and mincha offerings as is true for other types of sacrifices (such as peace-offerings and burnt-offerings), so that the sinner should not be rewarded. And why doesn’t the chatat sacrifice of a sinner require these elements? They are lacking so that his sacrifice not be seen as beautiful.

The sacrifices that a sinner brings in order to facilitate his atonement differ substantially from other, voluntary, sacrifices that a regular person would bring. A regular, voluntary sacrifice is offered in a special manner of beauty that is lacking in the case of a sacrifice brought by a sinner.

What is the impetus for Rabbi Shimon’s explanation? The *gemara* is “puzzled” by the text of the *mishna* on our *daf*. It states: Whether it be a *mincha* offering of a ‘sinner’ (one who was impure and entered the Mikdash or defiled holy objects and cannot afford an animal offering), or whether it is the case of all other *menachot*, in all cases where the *mincha* was offered by someone unfit to perform the service, it is invalid. The *gemara* raises a question: Why does the *mishna* create two categories for the *menachot* — a *mincha* of a sinner and a category for all other *menachot*? Why not just mention them all together in one category since they all have the same ruling regarding being invalid under the circumstances listed in the *mishna*?

The answer is, based on the teaching of Rabbi Shimon, that I might have thought that just as the *mincha* of a sinner is somehow “lesser” in that it is not required to be beautified with oil and frankincense, likewise it would still be valid even if offered by an unfit person, despite other *menachot* clearly being invalid if offered by an unfit person.

According to the *gemara*, it appears that we conclude that, despite this reasoning of Rabbi Simon, he also agrees that if a non-*kohen* performs the service of offering the sinner’s *mincha* it is invalid, and we do not say that allowing this service to be performed by an unqualified person should be another expression of denying beauty to such a sacrifice. There is clearly a distinction between limiting the accompaniments which enhance beauty and allowing it to be offered by someone who is not qualified to do so.

It is suggested to see the commentary of Rabbi Akiva Eiger on this *mishna* for a deeper understanding of this *mishna* and the *gemara*. In particular he addresses, as does our *gemara*, why a very similar *mishna* in Masechet Zevachim does not mention both a sin-offering for eating forbidden fats, along with the other sacrifices, which would lead to the same analysis and discussion as we find in our *sugya* in Masechet Menachot.

• *Menachot 6a*

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PARSHA Q&A?

1. Why must a captured woman mourn her family for a month in her captor's house?
 2. What fraction of the inheritance does a first-born receive if he has a) one brother? b) two brothers?
 3. What will become of a *ben sorer u'moreh* if his parents don't bring him to court?
 4. Why is it a degradation to G-d to hang a criminal's body on the gallows overnight?
 5. What do you do if you find a lost object that costs money to maintain?
 6. Why does the Torah forbid wearing the clothing of the opposite gender?
 7. Why does the Torah link the mitzvah of sending away the mother-bird with the mitzvah of making a railing on the roof of your house?
 8. What mixture of wool and linen is permitted to be worn?
 9. What three things happen to a man who falsely slanders his bride?
 10. Although the Egyptians enslaved the Jewish People, the Torah allows marriage with their third-generation converts. Why?
 11. Why is causing someone to sin worse than killing him?
 12. If one charges interest to his fellow Jew, how many commandments has he transgressed?
 13. What is the groom's special obligation to his bride during their first year together?
 14. When is a groom required to fight in a non-obligatory war?
 15. What type of object may one not take as collateral?
 16. "Remember what G-d did to Miriam." To what event does the Torah refer?
 17. If a poor person finds money, the one who lost it receives a blessing. From where do we derive this?
 18. Who has the primary obligation to perform *yibum*?
 19. Which two people in this week's *Parsha* are required to speak in *Lashon Hakodesh*?
 20. How does the Torah describe those who cheat in business?
-

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this week's questions! - All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 21:13 - So her captor will find her unattractive.
 2. 21:17 - a) 2/3 b) 1/2
 3. 21:22 - He will eventually rob and kill to support his physical indulgences.
 4. 21:23 - Because humans are made in G-d's image, and because the Jewish People are G-d's children.
 5. 22:2 - Sell it and save the money for the owner.
 6. 22:5 - It leads to immorality.
 7. 22:8 - To teach that one mitzvah leads to another, and to prosperity.
 8. 22:12 - Wool *tzitzit* on a linen garment.
 9. 22:18 - He receives lashes, pays a fine of 100 silver *selah*, and may never divorce her against her will.
 10. 23:8 - Because they hosted Yaakov and his family during the famine.
 11. 23:9 - Murder takes away life in this world, while causing someone to sin takes away his life in the World to Come.
 12. 23:21 - Three; two negative commandments and a positive commandment.
 13. 24:5 - To gladden her.
 14. 24:5 - When he remarries his ex-wife.
 15. 24:6 - Utensils used to prepare food.
 16. 24:9 - G-d punishing Miriam with *tzara'at* for speaking *lashon harah*.
 17. 24:19 - From the mitzvah to leave the "forgotten bundle" for the poor.
 18. 25:6 - The eldest brother.
 19. 25:8 - The *yavam* (brother-in-law) and the *yavamah* (his childless brother's widow).
 20. 25:16 - "An abomination (*to'evah*) to G-d."
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LOVE of the LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

Air of Wisdom

The special quality of learning Torah in Eretz Yisrael finds expression in a number of places in Talmud and Midrash.

“The gold of that Land is good” writes the Torah about Eretz Yisrael in its description of the area surrounding one of the rivers flowing from the Garden of Eden. This gold refers to the words of Torah which are more precious than gold, and this



description teaches us that there is no Torah like the Torah of Eretz Yisrael, and no wisdom like the wisdom of Eretz Yisrael.

After arriving in Eretz Yisrael after many years in Babylon, Rabbi Zeira reconsidered a position he had in a legal dispute with a colleague. “This is conclusive proof, he exclaimed, “that the very air of Eretz Yisrael makes one wiser.”

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Torah describes the only permissible way a woman captured in battle may be married. If a man marries two wives, and the less-favored wife bears a firstborn son, this son’s right to inherit a double portion is protected against the father’s desire to favor the child of the favored wife. The penalty for a rebellious son, who will inevitably degenerate into a monstrous criminal, is stoning. A body must not be left on the gallows overnight, because it had housed a holy soul. Lost property must be returned. Men are forbidden from wearing women’s clothing and vice versa. A mother bird may not be taken together with her eggs. A fence must be built around the roof of a house. It is forbidden to plant a mixture of seeds, to plow with an ox and a donkey together, or to combine wool and linen in a garment. A four-cornered garment must have twisted threads — *tzitzit* — on its corners. Laws regarding illicit relationships are detailed. When Israel goes to war, the camp must be governed by rules of spiritual purity. An escaped slave must not be returned to his master.

Taking interest for lending to a Jew is forbidden.

Bnei Yisrael are not to make vows. A worker may eat of the fruit he is harvesting. Divorce and marriage are legislated. For the first year of marriage, a husband is exempt from the army and stays home to rejoice with his wife. Tools of labor may not be impounded, as this prevents the debtor from earning a living. The penalty for kidnapping for profit is death. Removal of the signs of the disease *tzara’at* is forbidden. Even for an overdue loan, the creditor must return the collateral daily if the debtor needs it. Workers’ pay must not be delayed. The guilty may not be subjugated by punishing an innocent relative. Because of their vulnerability, converts and orphans have special rights of protection. The poor are to have a portion of the harvest. A court may impose lashes. An ox must not be muzzled while threshing. It is a mitzvah for a man to marry his brother’s widow if the deceased left no offspring. Weights and measures must be accurate and used honestly. The *parsha* concludes with the mitzvah to erase the name of Amalek, for, in spite of knowing about the Exodus, he ambushed the Jewish People.

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BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

Spiritual Light

From: Sharon

*Dear Rabbi,
I'm fascinated by the imagery of light in spirituality, particularly regarding humans and the description of "enlightened" people as reflecting light. Would you possibly elaborate on this?*

Dear Sharon,

This is a scintillating question and I'd be happy to shed some light on the topic!

Clearly, G-d is viewed as the energizing source or force behind all Existence. For this reason, G-d, G-d's influence and G-dliness are all naturally perceived as, and portrayed with, imagery of the sun, energy, and light.

Therefore, people who are "closer" to this source or influence or quality are viewed as receiving or reflecting this energy and light to a greater degree than others.

A prime example of this is regarding Moshe's receiving the Torah (Exodus 34:29-30): "And it came to pass when Moshe descended from Mount Sinai, and the two tablets of the testimony were in Moshe's hand...that Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moshe, and, behold, the skin of his face had become radiant, and they were afraid to come near him".

This may be similar to an intensely radiant halo. It's very interesting, in fact, that the English terms for this phenomenon are nearly identical to the ancient Hebrew words. "Halo" is as in the verse "*Hilo* (His light) *aley roshi* (is upon my head)" (Job 29:3); and "aura" is as in the Hebrew word "*ora*" which also means light.

However, according to ancient Jewish sources, even more than reflecting from the Source, this sacred light radiating from the righteous is viewed as actually emanating from It.

Thus, the illustrious medieval theologian, philosopher and poet Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi (1075 Spain-1171 Israel) in his famous Kuzari (4:15) on the fundamental beliefs of Judaism, illuminates the relationship between G-d and humanity with the analogy of the sun to stones on the earth. Light is radiated from the sun equally to all. The relationship of this light to the differ-

ent types of rocks varies not according to the light, which is constant, but rather to the various qualities of the stones. Some are opaque and occluded, and reveal little of the light; others are luminescent and reflect sparkles of the light; yet others, the precious, polished gems, are translucent, such that their pristine purity enables them to become infused with the light, which penetrates them and is transmitted through them.

So too, coarse human beings reveal little of the sacred light. More refined people reflect the sacred light externally. However, the light seen emanating from the truly elevated, pious and pure individuals, like polished, precious, translucent gems, is actually His light shining through them from the "other side". And His Light projected through them is via the Divine soul, as in the verse, "Man's soul is the candle of G-d" (Prov. 20:27). Thus, their soul is actually His flame, His light.

According to this explanation, the light emanating from Moshe was not a "reflection" of his closeness to G-d. It was G-d's light itself shining from within him. For this reason the people could not gaze upon that light, as one cannot gaze upon the light of the sun.

This also explains another enigmatic teaching. The Talmudic Sages taught (Gen. Rabbah 8:9) that when Man (the initial, singular, composite being of Adam and Eve) was created, the angels mistook him for G-d and were inclined to express the Holiness of G-d before him. The question is, as holy as Man was before the sin, how could the angels have possibly confused him with G-d? However, Jewish mystical teachings (Zohar, Pekudei 168) explain that the Torah's description of G-d's clothing Adam and Eve in garments of skin after they became exposed by sin (Gen. 3:21) is actually referring to G-d's clothing their beings with bodily skin. But before then they were beings of light without physical bodies. And since the pure, pristine light-body of Man was perfectly "translucent", even the angels, seeing Him through him, mistook him for Him. And by extension, the light which is visible on or in the righteous is actually a manifestation of their transforming the occluded physical body toward translucence, on the path of restoring the light-body of Man, from which we all derive and which is the perfected state to which we must all aspire.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

Roads and Paths, Ways and Means

The month of Elul is traditionally set aside as a time for introspection and moral contemplation. This generally produces a major uptick in the study of *Mussar* (“moral instruction”). Some famous books of *Mussar* include such titles as *Orchot Tzadikim* (“Ways of the Righteous”), *Mesillot Yesharim* (“Paths of the Just”), *Derech Hashem* (“Way of G-d”), and *Netivot Shalom* (“The Lanes of Peace”). The common denominator between all these names is that they refer to different types of roads and paths. Over the next few weeks we will study these different words and more, in order to better our understanding of these synonyms for roads.

This week, we focus on the words *derech* and *orach*.

Rabbi Eliyahu Kramer (1720-1797), also known as the Vilna Gaon, explains the difference between a *derech* and an *orach* is that a *derech* is wide and open to the public, while an *orach* is short and narrow, and is not as commonly accessed. Similarly, Rabbi Meir Leibush Weiser (1809-1879), better known as Malbim, explains that while both a *derech* and an *orach* are open to the public, the *derech* is used to travel from major city to major city, or from province to province, while the *orach* reaches outlying towns and villages.

On his deathbed, Jacob blessed his son Dan with the following words: “*Dan shall be a snake on the derech, a serpent on the orach*” (Gen. 49:16-18). Why did Jacob first say that Dan should be *a snake on the derech* and then seemingly repeat himself by saying *a serpent on the orach*?

In line with the Vilna Gaon, the difference between *derech* and *orach* is that a *derech* is wider and more accessible, while an *orach* is narrower and less traversable. Based on this, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Shlez (1834-1914) explains that Jacob foresaw that two idols were destined to be set up at the City of Dan. The first was Micah’s idol, which served as a *snake on the derech* in discouraging people from performing the mandated pilgrimages to the Tabernacle at Shiloh, and subsequently to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. The second idol at Dan was Jeroboam’s Golden Calf, which proved to be like *a serpent on the orach*. Though, in practice, Micah’s idol discouraged people from performing the required pilgrimages, Jeroboam *actively* engaged in thwarting people

from doing so by royal fiat. As a result, the way to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem in Jeroboam’s time is described as a narrow *orach*, and his Golden Calf is presented as *a serpent* sitting on that *orach*, furthering discouraging pedestrians from treading upon it. The way to the Tabernacle/Temple in Micah’s time was described as a *derech* because Micah’s idol did not *actively* bar people from performing the pilgrimages.

Taking a page from Malbim’s approach, Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer (1866-1935) suggests that because an *orach* breaks away from a main road to lead more directly to less-travelled destinations, the righteous man is described as “safeguarding the *orach*” (Proverbs 2:20). That is, because the righteous man is also meticulous with the details, not just the general path, when he is described as a guardian of the proper path we use the word *orach* which is more specific than *derech*.

The *Zohar* (*Vayakhel* 215a and *Kedoshim* 88a) explains that a *derech* is a road which everybody has access to. On the other hand, the *Zohar* explains that an *orach* is a brand new road upon which nobody has previously trodden. For this reason, explains the *Zohar*, the righteous are associated with an *orach*; they bring to This World novel Torah ideas which had not yet previously existed, and they reveal the presence of G-d in places in the world in which it had not yet been revealed.

Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim of Breslau (1740-1814) disagrees with the Vilna Gaon and Malbim’s approach, instead arguing that a *derech* and *orach* can refer to the exact same road, but the two words focus on different aspects of such a road. In his estimation both words refer to a long and wide road, but *derech* focuses on the great length of the road, while *orach* focuses on the spacious width of the road. Rabbi Pappenheim explains that the word *orach* is derived from the two-letter root *REISH-CHET* which refers to width, and from which such words as *revach* (space) and *rachav* (wide) are derived.

Radak explains that *oraiach* (“guest”) is related to *orach* because a guest arrives at his destination by taking the road he travelled. Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim adds that a banquet held in honor of a specific guest is called

Continued on page nine

NEW
SERIES!

ANATOMY OF A MITZVAH

BY RABBI YITZCHAK BOTTON

That's Nice, Can I Have It?

"You shall not desire your fellow's house." (Parshat Va'etchanan, Devarim 5:18)

As a father, I find it heartwarming that my son and daughter (who are very close in age) always try to make sure that they each get exactly the same amount of cake, candy, or whatever is being served. Sometimes they even make sure to put aside a share for the other if a treat is served in the other's absence.

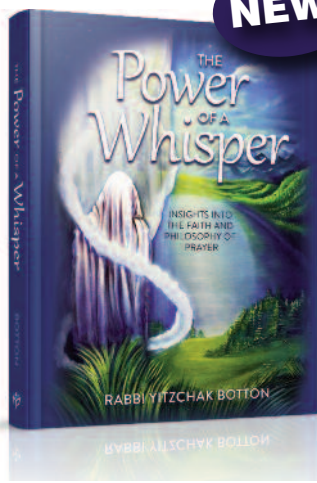
I guess, from their perspective, it is only fair. If my wife and I love them both the same, then we ought to express that love in equal amounts. Of course I realize that at some point we will have to explain to them that people don't always get exactly the same thing.

In Parshat Va'etchanan we are commanded not to desire things that belong to other people. Now, one might ask: Is it really fair to ask this of a person? How is a poor man expected to react when he sees his neighbor down the road living in a deluxe mansion, with several expensive cars and even more bank accounts? Is he not allowed to want some of those things for himself? What harm is there in simply having a desire for something? Yet, the Torah forbids this from us.

In Jewish philosophy we are taught that *desire* is one

of the most powerful drives found within human nature. Unlike the power of sight, hearing, or even thinking, which functions in one particular part of the body, desire encompasses one's entire being. Desires lead to actions, and when left unchecked they can easily grow out of control, causing a person to behave in ways unimaginable.

We can now appreciate why the Torah forbids one to desire another's belongings. As a preemptive measure the Torah forces a person to face his inner desires before they get out of control. If one avoids this mitzvah he may come to try to attain the objects he desires. This is the sin of coveting. If an attempt to purchase the object one covets fails, one may likely resort to persuasion, and eventually the threat of force. The world is full of hate, envy, theft, and even murder, all in order to attain things that belong to others. People have been murdered for watches, jewelry, even for a pair of sneakers. With one look at the news today, we can see the prophetic vision of the Torah, which understands the essence of human nature.



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Letter & Spirit

Insights based on the writings of Rav S. R. Hirsch

BY RABBI YOSEF HERSHMAN

A Rebel with a Cause

The law of the *ben sorer u'moreh*, the rebellious son who is put to death in his adolescence at the request of his parents, is unusual in many regards. Our Sages have taught that there never was such a disobedient and recalcitrant son in the past, and there will never be one in the future. Rather, it was and will remain only a theoretical “problem,” as the conditions stipulated by law can never actually be satisfied. It was written, then, not as practical law, but a rich source of pedagogic truths, whose study is of great benefit for the educational work of parents.

Rav Hirsch’s masterful explication of the laws of the *ben sorer u'moreh* spans many pages, and distills several essential principles in education from the various details of the laws. We summarize here but a few.

The first aspect of the law that draws our attention is the age-span during which the death penalty is applicable — the first three months after a boy has reached the age of puberty, usually upon completion of his thirteenth year. We see that this period is regarded as a crucial phase in the formation of a child’s character. While this period is marked by an awakening of the latent sensual impulses and appetites, it can, and should, also be marked by the awakening of the moral strength that will guide the child away from vice and base passion. That latter awakening is characterized with the joy of discovering the truth and is fueled by the desire to adopt great and noble values — the discovery of a higher-self. Precisely when the struggle is born, the wherewithal to succeed is also born, and must be carefully cultivated as the child “comes of age.” This is when a child becomes a *bar mitzvah*, literally a “son of the commandment” and acquires the discipline and striving necessary to overcome temptation and commit to the law.

If, at the time when he is supposed to be developing seriousness and maturity, he displays such defiant conduct — *zollel v'soveh*, out-and-out gluttony and

drunkenness — then we can be certain that any further effort at character training will only end in failure. The glutton’s desire for good food takes precedence over any moral considerations, such that he pilfers from his own parents. In addition, to be liable, not only must he have used the stolen money for his revelry, but he must have consumed it in the company of good-for-nothings.

To summarize: the *ben sorer u'moreh* must have displayed willful, perverse disobedience in general, excessive predilection for good food and alcoholic drinks, pilfering at home and keeping bad company. These sad criteria — which as defined have never and will never be met — should each engage our attention as parents and educators.

One of these traits in particular — gluttony — is one we sometimes unwittingly encourage. When cuisine is given high importance in the home — where the assortment of sushi or the price of wines and scotch is the gage of the happiness at a joyous occasion — we communicate base pleasure over refinement. Rav Hirsch encourages teaching and modeling moderate eating, including occasional finer cuisine, to help children discover on their own the limits of the happiness that a good steak or good wine can bring. When those limits are realized, an appetite can be developed for the finer joys of life.

Another requirement of the *ben sorer u'moreh* holds the key to child-rearing. This son can be liable only if his parents were of the same voice and heart. They must come to the judges declaring, *our child* does not listen to *our voice*. If this unity and consistency is lacking, then we fault the parents and not the child. To be successful parents, they must be equals, completely in agreement, of one heart and mind in their education of an influence over their child.

• Sources: *Commentary, Devarim 21:18; Collected Writings VII, p.333 ff.*



BY RABBI ZE'EV KRAINES

Ceiling as Lintel

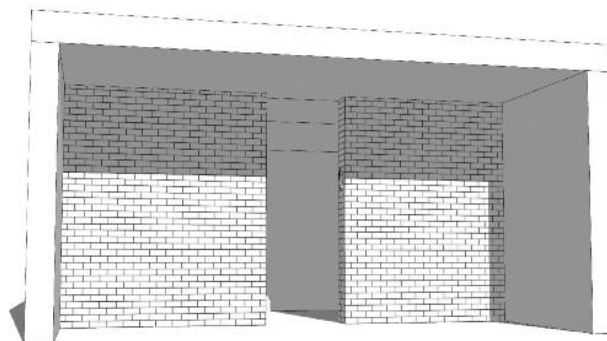
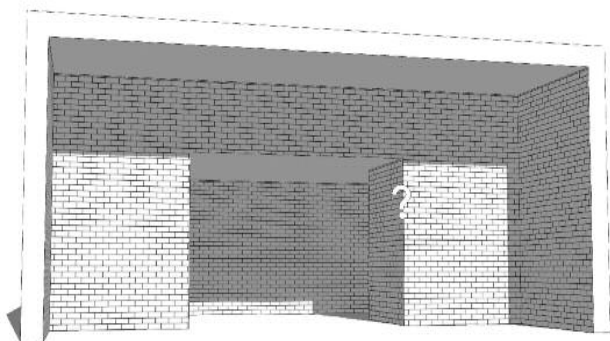
Q: When we moved into our new home, one thing puzzled me about the mezuzot that were already in place. Except in the bedroom area, there are no lintels in the doorways between the main rooms. And yet, some of those doorways had mezuzot and others did not. The owners told me that they were sure this was what their rabbi advised. Do I need to put mezuzot on the remaining doorways?

A: Although the halacha states that a doorway without a lintel is exempt from mezuzah, if the ceiling's edge is flush with the opening of the room, many authorities contend that if the edge is shaped like a frame and pro-

trudes slightly it is considered a "virtual lintel." Others opine that it is deemed a lintel even if it is flat. In both cases, a mezuzah is affixed without a *beracha*.

If the doorway is simply two posts protruding from the wall but has no lintel, even if these "posts" are merely the ends of walls with no fitted wooden or metal posts on them, some authorities require a mezuzah to be affixed on the right post. However, one can rely on the many authorities who exempt this opening entirely.

- Sources: *Mezuzas Melachim*, *Halachah L'Moshe* 109; *Chovas Ha'Dar* 7:7-8; *Sha'arei HaMezuzah* 11:6-7; *Chazon Ish Y.D.* 172:2-3; *Agur B'ohalecha* 21:22;



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What's in a Word...continued from page six

an *arucha* (although, in Modern Hebrew, *arucha* is used to refer to any meal).

The root of the word *derech* is related to the verb *dorech*, which not only means "tread" but also refers to the action of one who operates a wine press (see Isaiah 63:2). Rashi (to Deut. 33:29) explains that the verb *dorech* also implies the defeat and humbling of one's foes by "stepping on them". Based on this, Rabbi Moshe Shapiro (1935-2017) explains that the word *derech* denotes the path of life, which is rife with trials and

tribulations. Man is expected to quash and vanquish those ordeals by overcoming them, in order to successfully continue onwards. Only by consistently living up to that expectation can Man defeat these impediments and truly progress in his path of life. Remember: before we had Waze to keep us on the right path, we had *Mussar*.

To be continued...

Liluy Nishmat my mother Bracha bat R' Dovid
and my grandmother Shprintza bat R' Meir

BY RABBI ARI WASSERMAN

Trusting in G-d vs. Putting in the Effort

QUESTION:

I have just started a new job that requires, as per my contract, that I work 7.5 hours per day, 37.5 hours a week — this is basically a 40-hour work-week with a half-hour off for lunch.

However, as is common in corporate America, more is actually expected of me. Indeed, in this firm everyone works significantly more than eight-hour days. Furthermore, as I am new, I am on “probation” for the first six months, meaning that my employers are evaluating my performance and deciding whether or not to keep me or to let me go when the six-month period ends.

It would be ideal for me if I could actually work according to the contracted hours. This would leave me time for my Torah studies, for my family, for exercise and recreation. But I realize that, if I do the minimum required, I may not have a job in six months.

Thus far I have been working 10-hour days in the office and also answering e-mails while commuting or at home. In terms of my Torah studies, these work hours have caused me to cut my learning in half, as I am only able to learn about 45 minutes in the morning, instead of my customary hour-and-a-half.

How do I balance *bitachon* (trusting that G-d will look after me even if I don't do what everybody else does) with *hishtadlut* (the requisite effort expected of me to earn a living, which means doing much more than the minimum in order to insure that I keep this job)?

RESPONSE:

I asked advice of Rav Mayer Twersky in answering your question, and he distinguished between *bitachon* and *hishtadlut* as follows:

Today, G-d operates through natural channels. Since the Children of Israel finished their wanderings in the desert, there has been no manna falling from the skies. Everyone is expected to put in the requisite effort — *hishtadlut* — to make a living in the modern world.

Indeed, the Hebrew for “world” — *olam* — comes from the verb *le'haalim*, which means “to hide.” In this world, G-d hides, so to speak. And because He hides, we cannot depend on miracles.

Trusting in G-d — *bitachon* — does not mean that we can say a prayer and expect the unexpected.

We have to put in the required effort. But once we do, we can trust that our *hishtadlut* will become a vehicle through which G-d will provide for us while still hiding behind the curtain backstage. However, this will happen only *bederech hateva*, in the way of nature.

In other words, *hishtadlut* has to make sense *bederech hateva*, in the way of nature.

For example, it would not be enough for you to buy a lottery ticket in order to get rich. Buying the ticket would not be sufficient *hishtadlut* because winning would not be natural, since the odds against it are astronomical.

Similarly, going to law school would not be sufficient *hishtadlut* if you don't also study for the tests. Obtaining a law degree and making a living as a lawyer requires more *hishtadlut* than just attending classes.

In your particular case, the key is finding what would be reasonable *hishtadlut* in terms of keeping your job. (*Hishtadlut* has to be reasonable, it need not be superlative.) If the culture of the firm is that everyone puts in more than 37.5 hours, then it is clear that merely working the minimum is not reasonable. Reasonable *hishtadlut* is working more. The question is: How much more?

It seems you have found a balance by working 10-hour days, but not 12-hour days, which still leaves you time for some Torah studies and for your family. However, if it turns out that to keep your job you need to work 12-hour days, then you will have to ask yourself if this is the right job for you.

Dedicated

Eiluy nishmas Yehudah Ben Shmuel HaKohen Breslauer z”l

BY RABBI YEHUDA SPITZ

The Double-Header Haftara in 2018

Directly due to recent interesting circumstances of *Parshat Re'eh/Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Elul* (a few weeks ago), an unusual occurrence will transpire this week on *Parshat Ki Teitzei*: a double *haftara*. Not a printing mistake, this double *haftara* will actually be recited by the vast majority of Ashkenazic congregations worldwide.

Many do not realize this special occurrence even exists. In fact, one recent time when this occurred I mentioned the uniqueness of this situation to the *gab-bai* on that Shabbat itself. He responded that he had never heard of a double *haftara*! However, his skeptical response was quite understandable as the previous occurrence of a double *haftara* to that Shabbat was fourteen years prior!

Haftara History

To properly understand why there can be a double *haftara*, some background is needed.

According to several *Rishonim*, the *haftarot* were established when the wicked Antiochus (infamous from the Chanukah miracle) outlawed public reading of the Torah. The Sages of the time therefore established the custom of reading a topic from the *Nevi'im* (Prophets) similar to what was supposed to be read from the Torah. Even after the decree was nullified, and prior to the Gemara's printing, this became *min-hag Yisrael*.

Most *haftarot* share some similarity with at least

one concept presented in the Torah reading. The *Gemara Megillah* (29b-31a) discusses the proper *haftara* readings for the various holidays throughout the year. The *Pesikta* (an early *Midrash* cited by many early authorities) continues the teachings of *Chazal* as to the proper *haftara* readings, starting from the Fast of Shiva Assur b'Tammuz.

During the 'Three Weeks' from 17 Tamuz until Tisha B'Av we read '*Tilasa d'Paranusa*' — 'Three Readings of Punishment'. After Tisha B'Av (starting with Shabbat Nachamu, dubbed so due to its *haftara* of '*Nachamu Nachamu Ami*') until Rosh Hashana, '*Shiva d'Nechemta*', or 'Seven Readings of Consolation' are read. This is followed by a reading of *Teshuva*, during the Shabbat between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, aptly named 'Shabbat Shuva' for its repentance-themed *haftara* starting with '*Shuva Yisrael*'. The *AbuDraham*, as well as *Rabbeinu Tam*, conclude that these special *haftara* readings are so important that they are never pushed off!

Head-to-Head Haftarot

Our dilemma arises when that rule goes head-to-head with another rule. The *Gemara (Megillah 31a)* states that whenever Rosh Chodesh falls out on Shabbat, a special *haftara* is read: '*Hashamayim Kisi*', as it mentions the topics of both Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh. If Rosh Chodesh falls out on Sunday, then on the preceding Shabbat the *haftara* of '*Machar Chodesh*' is

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SEASONS Then & Now

BY RABBI CHAVIV DANESH

Month of Elul

Unlike secular holidays that simply commemorate the past, Jewish holidays revive the past and bring it to the present. The commentaries explain that every holiday carries within it a special energy that becomes available every year on the holiday. Through keeping the *mitzvot* that pertain to each holiday, one can tap into the special energy of that holiday and thereby draw closer to G-d (see *Derech Hashem*, part 4, 4:8). The same is true regarding the different months of the year. Every month has its own unique characteristics, which, if utilized correctly, can help one deepen his relationship with G-d. With this in mind, let's try to analyze the special characteristics of the month of Elul.

Historically, Chazal tell us that Moshe Rabbeinu went up to receive the second set of tablets on Rosh Chodesh Elul. It was then that they blew the shofar to remind the people not to sin like they did the first time that Moshe Rabbeinu went up and they made the golden calf, and to awaken them to repent for the past. Their repentance culminated on Yom Kippur when G-d finally said that He forgave them and gave them the second set of tablets (*Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer* 46; Rashi on *Devarim* 9:18). Therefore, just as Yom Kippur continues to be a day of forgiveness in the present, so too, the days leading to Yom Kippur continue to be days that are auspicious for repentance.

Based on the above, many have the custom to blow the shofar starting from Rosh Chodesh Elul, to awaken the people to stay away from transgressions and to repent before Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur; as the verse says "Can a shofar be blown in the city and the nation not be frightened?!" This is indeed the prevalent custom of the Ashkenazim. The prevalent Sefardic custom is to say *selichot* starting from the day after Rosh Chodesh Elul with the same intention of awakening people to repent (See *Tur*, *Beit Yosef* 581:1; *Chayei Adam* 138:1; *Kaf Hachaim* 581:13-14).

Hints to Elul

The commentaries find hints of the name Elul in various verses, and, from there, learn out how one can utilize the energy of this month properly.

The name "Elul" is hinted at in the verse "*Umal Hashem elokecha et levavecha v'et levav zarecha*" (G-d will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendent). The beginning letters of the words "*et levavecha v'et levav*" spell Elul (*Ba'al HaTurim* on *Devarim* 30:6). This hints at the special help from Above that we are given in this month to break free from the bonds of the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) that hardens our hearts and prevents us from repenting.

Furthermore, the beginning letters of the verse in *Shir Hashirim* (6:3), "*Ani l'dodi v'dodi li*" (I am for my Beloved and my Beloved is for me), which refers to the relationship between us and G-d, spell "Elul" (*Abudarham*, *Seder Tefillat Rosh Hashana*). This idea hints to the month's being an auspicious time for our prayers, which are essentially a form of bonding with G-d — Who is our Beloved — to be accepted.

Finally, the name Elul is hinted at in the verse in *Megillat Esther* (9:22) "*U'mishloach manot ish lere'ehu u'matanot la'evyonim*" (referring to the *mitzvah* of giving presents to the poor on Purim). The first letters of the words "*ish lere'ehu u'matanot la'evyonim*" spell Elul. This hints at the idea of the importance of giving charity in this month as well (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 128:1).

Chazal tell us that repentance, prayer, and charity have the power to undo a harsh decree (*Ber. Rabbah* 44:15). The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* says that the places where the name Elul appears refer exactly to these three things, encouraging us to involve ourselves with them before the judgment on Rosh Hashana (*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 128:1). May we all merit making the most of this precious month and be granted a favorable judgment on Rosh Hashana.

read, as it mentions the following day being Rosh Chodesh.

The \$64,000 question becomes: What happens when Rosh Chodesh Elul falls out on Shabbat or Sunday? Which ruling trumps which? Do we follow the *Gemara* or the *Pesikta*? Do we stick with the ‘*Shiva d’Nechemta*’ or the special Rosh Chodesh reading?

The answer is that there is no easy answer! In fact, the Mordechai cites both as separate, equally valid *minhagim*, with no clear-cut ruling. So what are we supposed to do? Which *minhag* do we follow? It turns out that the correct answer, as well as the double *haftarah*, depends on the divergence of Sefardic and Ashkenazic custom.

Sefardic Selection

The Beit Yosef writes that the *halacha* follows the AbuDraham, as he was considered an expert in these topics. Consequently, in his authoritative Codex, the Shulchan Aruch, he rules that on Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Elul, only that week’s *haftara* of consolation, ‘*Aniyah So’arah*’ is read. This would also hold true if Rosh Chodesh fell on Sunday, that only that week’s *haftara* of consolation would be the reading, and not ‘*Machar Chodesh*’. This is the general Sefardic ruling on this topic.

Ashkenazic Choice

Yet, the Rema, citing the *Sefer Haminhagim* of Rav Yitzchak Isaac Tyrnau, argues that since the special reading of Shabbat Rosh Chodesh also contains words of consolation, it is therefore the proper reading, even for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Elul. Moreover, this reading is mentioned specifically by the *Gemara* as the proper reading for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh, with no special dispensation given for Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Elul. Additionally, since it is recited more often (as Shabbat Rosh Chodesh falls out at least twice a year), one will fulfill the Talmudic dictum of ‘*tadir v’sheino tadir, tadir kodem*’ — preference is given to the more common practice, by reading this *haftara* instead.

Parenthetically, and conversely, if Rosh Chodesh would only fall out on Sunday, all would agree that only that week’s *haftara* of consolation would be read, as there is no conciliatory theme in ‘*Machar Chodesh*’.

Ground-Rule Double

However, by maintaining the Rosh Chodesh priori-

ty, it would seem that we would miss out on one of the ‘*Shiva d’Nechemta*’, as there are not enough weeks before Rosh Hashana to fit in all seven of these special *haftarot* when one of the *haftarot* (occurring when Rosh Chodesh falls out on Shabbat Parshat Re’eh) is taken up by ‘*Hashamayim Kisi*’. Yet, the *Pesikta* and *Rishonim* stressed the importance and necessity of each and every one of them being read.

Therefore, the *Sefer Haminhagim* maintains that we need to make up for the missing *haftara*, and this is done as an addition, on Parshat Ki Teitzei, two weeks later. The reason is that the *haftara* of Parshat Re’eh, ‘*Aniyah So’arah*’ in the original *Navi* (*Yeshayahu* 54: 11) follows consecutively after the *haftara* of Parshat Ki Teitzei, ‘*Runi Akara*’ (*Yeshayahu* 54: 1). Therefore, this solution turns two separate *haftarot* into one long double-header, and thereby fulfills everyone’s requirement to hear all seven of the Conciliatory *haftarot*.

This resolution of having a double-header *haftara* on Parshat Ki Teitzei when Rosh Chodesh Elul falls out two weeks earlier on Parshat Re’eh is cited and codified in halacha by many authorities, and is the definitive Ashkenazic ruling. Sefardim, on the other hand, do not experience this interesting occurrence, as they follow the Shulchan Aruch’s rule of never pushing off any of the ‘*Shiva d’Nechemta*’, and thereby never having the need to double up *haftarot*.

One need not worry about flipping pages to keep up with this double *haftara*. It can be easily found in its full (combined) glory as the singular *haftara* of Parshat Noach, as one of the topics mentioned in it is a reference to the Great Deluge, referred to as the ‘*Mei Noach*’.

Those who miss this unique opportunity should not fret too much, as we don’t have to wait an additional fourteen years to have a Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Elul. In fact, aside from this occurring in 2015, 2016, and again this year, it will fall out several more times over the next few years. Hopefully, by then, the *gabbai* will remember that double-headers are not exclusively reserved for ballgames.

The author wishes to thank R’ Yoel Rosenfeld and R’ Shloime Lerner for raising awareness of this unique issue, and serving as the impetus for my interest and research in this topic.

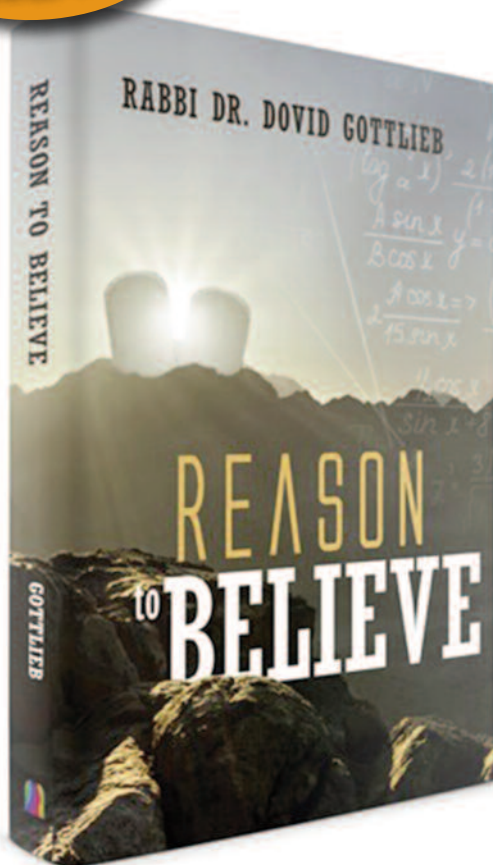
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